

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 SP-02 L-01 SAB-01 PM-03 INR-05

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R 111726Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5088

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5570

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ, US

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF 409TH PRC MEETING, SEPTEMBER 10

1. TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: AMBASSADOR PROVIDED COPIES OF NSDM 302 AND DRAFT THRESHOLD AGREEMENT TO GOVERNOR AND CINC. HE REPORTED THAT US NEGOTIATORS HAD MADE THEIR INITIAL PRESENTATION ON PREVIOUS DAY (SEPT. 9) AND THAT THERE WAS NO INDICATION AS YET OF REACTION FROM PANAMANIAN SIDE. AMBASSADOR SAID THAT BY THE TIME OF THEIR FORTHCOMING LUNCHEON WITH US NEGOTIATORS ON CONTADORA ISLAND, PANAMANIAN POSITION WOULD BE CLEARER. HE STATED THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER PLANNED TO COME TO CANAL ZONE ON SEPT. 15 TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CIVIC COUNCILS AND LABOR UNIONS. GOVERNOR SUGGESTED TO CINC THAT LABOR LEADERS OF SOUTHCOM CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES MIGHT ALSO WISH TO ATTEND.

2. HIGH-LEVEL VISIT: THERE FOLLOWED LONG DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT OF SEPT. 2-3 VISIT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS, JCS CHAIRMAN GEN. BROWN, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES ROGERS AND VEYSEY. AMBASSADOR STATED VISIT HAD CLEAR AND FAVORABLE IMPACT IN PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENTAL AND

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PRIVATE CIRCLES AND COMMENTED ON FAVORABLE EDITORIAL

OPINION BOTH IN PANAMA AND US. VISIT UNDOUBTEDLY SET GOOD TONE FOR CURRENT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS, ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR, BUT ALSO PROBABLY GENERATED EXCESS OPTIMISM AND EUPHORIA AMONG SOME PANAMANIAN. INITIAL PRESENTATION BY AMBASSADOR BUNKER PROBABLY SERVED TO INJECT SOME REALISM INTO PANAMANIAN PERCEPTION OF US POSITION. IN THIS CONNECTION, CINC COMMENTED THAT GEN. BROWN'S STATEMENT PROBABLY INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY IN PANAMA THAN IN U.S. U.S. UNDERSTANDING IS THAT CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT IS AS FORTHCOMING AS NSDM AND NO MORE.

3. COOPERATIVE MEASURES: CINC REPORTED GEN. BROWN HAD REQUESTED HIM TO SUBMIT BY COB SEPT. 10 A LIST IDENTIFYING MILITARY INITIATIVES WHICH SOUTHCOM MIGHT TAKE TO "LUBRICATE PREVIOUS POINTS OF FRICTION WITH GN/GOP" AND TO DISSEMINATE THIS POLICY DOWN THROUGH THE RANKS IN THE COMMAND. HE ASKED AMBASSADOR AND GOVERNOR FOR THEIR CONCURRENCE ON DRAFT TELEGRAM REPLYING TO JCS REQUEST. AMBASSADOR REQUESTED THAT SOUTHCOM INITIATIVES TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIVERSE GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF GN OFFICERS AND THE RESULTING HEAVY PRESSURES ON THEIR TIME. HE CAUTIONED THAT US MILITARY SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO "OVERLOAD THE CIRCUIT" OR HOLD EXCESSIVE EXPECTATIONS OF GN/GOP RESPONSE.

4. GOVERNOR'S VIEWS: WITH REGARD TO OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING COOPERATION WITH GOP, GOVERNOR EXPRESSED HOPE THAT RECOGNITION WOULD BE GIVEN TO CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS MADE IN PAST BY BOTH PCC AND SOUTHCOM. HE SAID RECORDS ARE REplete WITH EXAMPLES OF US EFFORTS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND RESPOND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE TO GOP REQUESTS, PARTICULARLY WHEN JURISDICTIONAL ISSUES DID NOT ARISE. HE MENTIONED SEVERAL EXAMPLES, E.G., GN REQUEST TO USE COCO SOLO SEAPLANE RAMPS, PUNTA MALA RECREATIONAL AREA, PCC SECURITY POSITIONS, WHERE COMPANY WISHED TO BE RESPONSIVE BUT HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POSSIBLE ADVERSE CONGRESSIONAL REACTIONS. IGNORING CONGRESSIONAL SENSIBILITIES ON SUCH PROPOSALS MIGHT ONLY SERVE TO FOMENT INCREASED OPPOSITION TO TREATY. GOVERNOR HAS DISCUSSED THIS DILEMMA WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEYSEY IN CONNECTION

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WITH COCO SOLO MATTER AND IS EXPECTING TO RECEIVE GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON. GOVERNOR ALSO POINTED TO PROVOCATIVE PANAMANIAN ACTIONS WHICH SEEM DESIGNED TO MAKE COMPANY LOOK BAD AND EXPRESSED CURIOSITY WHY THIS TAKING PLACE AT A TIME WHEN US SIDE TRYING TO BE MORE COOPERATIVE. HE CITED AS EXAMPLES PRESS ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGULARITIES IN CANAL ZONE DOCKS AND GOP ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS INTENTION TO RAISE AT UNESCO PROBLEM OF DUAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN

PANAMA.

5. CONTINGENCY PLAN: GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS HOLDING ANY
FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT CONTINGENCY PLAN IN
ABEYANCE PENDING CLARIFICATION OF NEGOTIATORS' MESSAGE
TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEYSEY APPARENTLY SUGGESTING
INTERIM ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING LEGISLATION IN ANTICIPATION
OF TREATY (PANAMA 5492, PART IV, PARA B).

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